1: Jenness--53 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 437

"There is always much trade, of course, between neighbouring groups, and even between members of the same group. In the spring of 1915 a woman in Dolphin and Union strait went round the whole settlement trying to buy a tent-pole. Brisk barter took place when the west Coronation gulf Eskimos visited this settlement in March. One woman bought musk-ox skins with some cartridges she had received from the expedition, another sold a large wooden table. Dolphin and Union strait natives purchase stone lamps and pots, musk-ox ladles, blubber pounders, sled-toggles, and skins both of deer and of musk-oxen from the Eskimos of Coronation gulf, besides of course copper and implements made of it. As their own region, however, furnishes them with a few commodities for bartering, many, perhaps the majority, of these strait natives at some time in their lives make special journeys eastward, in order to collect their own copper and wood in the valleys of the Coppermine and Dease rivers, and to hew out their own lamps and pots near Tree river."

2: Stefansson--102-103
116, 463, 437

(1908-12) 1914

Copper Eskimo

"But besides this sexual division of labor there is a rudimentary one of another sort. Lame men or others for some reason not well able to hunt are likely to be occupied in the making and mending of implements and utensils and in some cases a man's skill at bow-making or pot-making is well known to be superior to the average and he therefore makes bows and pots for his neighbours occasionally merely as a favor, but [103] sometimes also for pay. Commonly a man who makes pots, for instance, is thereby handicapped in hunting and is consequently paid in caribou skins which he needs to clothe himself and his family."

12: Collinson--206 (1851-53) 1889 Copper Eskimo
116, 437

[T.M: extract from Lt. Jago's sledge journal] "On the afternoon of the 9th I observed a party of Esquimaux encamped on the ice, and I went out to them, but found none of our old friends were there, and they having nothing to barter I left them; but they followed me to where I encamped. They behaved very well, and were very much taken with the vocabulary, offering anything they had in their possession for it. I purchased two dogs of them, also some reindeer's meat, and fish, and when I made signs to them that we were going to sleep, they perfectly understood me, and we parted very good friends. One of the dogs made his escape during the night."

12: Collinson--221-222 (1851-53) 1889 Copper Eskimo-1-2

116, 437, 221, 225, 342

"The carpenter having made an outline sketch of a human skeleton, it was placed on the grave of our deceased shipmate, in hopes that it would deter the natives from disturbing his remains. They paid us a last visit on the 3rd, and we parted very good friends. We would have been better pleased could they have abstained from stealing. There is, however, great excuse for them; such riches they had never seen before: pieces of iron hoop, empty preserved meat tins, old clothes, &c., were still eagerly sought for. In considera-[222] tion of the many bows and arrows that had been purchased from them, I presented them as a last gift with one of the small spars we had obtained at Sitka, which would nearly supply the whole tribe. It is very difficult to say where they wintered, but I do not think they went further than the inlet Mr. Jago explored. Leaving us as they did on the 9th of November, and the sun disappearing on the 18th, there was but little daylight left. That they went round Point Wollaston is, I think, almost proved to a certainty by the cylinder deposited by Mr. Skead having been removed; and that they had been in communication with the party met by Lieut. Jago is also, I conceive, evident by the fact of his seeing Hongkong beads in their possession. My belief is that they wintered on the islands to the north side of that inlet he explored, where tide and wind would occasion cracks throughout nearly the whole winter, and whence they obtain seals. Several skins full of blubber were on their sleighs when they first returned, of which Mr. Phayre purchased five, making us rather more than 60 gallons of oil. Fuel they are totally independent of, and a snow-drift affords them material

for a winter habitation, the most elaborate of which would not occupy the family more than a day in erection. While with us they were constantly on the move, the tent seldom remaining two days in the same position, unless for lake fishing."

12: Collinson--274-275 (1851-53) 1889 Copper Eskimo
116, 501, 437

"Our kayak, which had been purchased in Port Clarence, had always excited great admiration among the natives; and I had told one of them that he should have it for five deer. [275] This week, however, they brought another alongside, and I at first thought they had misunderstood me. It fortunately afterwards struck me that they wished to exchange, which I was glad to do, in order to get a specimen of their work, where wood is so scarce: both were calculated to hold only one man; but ours was much larger, weighing 60 lbs., while theirs only weighed 26. In shape, too, they were somewhat different; ours, however, was slightly damaged; I therefore threw in an ash paddle, made of a broken oar, which sent them away highly pleased with the exchange."

3: Rasmussen--15 (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo
116, 437

"Both men and women were simply passionate bargainers and they traded everything, not merely as a sport but seriously as an art. This propensity of theirs was very useful to us in our endeavours to increase our collections of specimens, and it was not long before we had procured everything we thought we could afford to buy. For not only were they eager to trade; they were cunning traders and not at all shy of demanding high prices. Twenty-five dollars was considered reasonable for an unflensed seal, and, when the offer had been rejected, it might occur to them to demand one half of an expensive pair of prism binoculars. They were never afraid to give numbers of things away, from food to clothes; but if anything had to be paid for, it became so much the more costly. The only thing they put no value upon -- fortunately for me -- was their time, and consequently, in return for small, comparatively trifling presents I was able to keep them shut in for days when I wanted to enquire about their implement culture, their customs and habits, or their ancient tales."

Caribou leg skins were made into dog harnesses, snow mittens, and winter boots. The ears were used to trim the fronts of trousers at the waist line, or the backs and hoods of coats. The light skins of unborn fawns, or of fawns only a few days old, made serviceable clothes for tiny children, as well as summer caps to protect the head from mosquitoes, though for this last purpose marmot skin was often used instead. There were certain fashions in clothing. The heavy winter outer coat (*qulitaq*) was normally made from autumn skins, an adult's coat from the skins of the larger caribou, and a child's coat from yearlings and fawns. The two everyday coats, the *ilupaq* or inner coat and the *kapitaq* or outer coat, were of very short-haired summer skins; so, also, were the trousers, though for winter sealing it was advisable to have the outer pair of the thicker autumn skin. The same principle applied to the rest of the clothing and to the bedding; wherever warmth was especially requisite, autumn skins were necessary; otherwise the Eskimo preferred the light summer skins.

The spring skins of caribou were thrown away except in emergencies, because they were full of holes from the escaping larvæ of the warble-fly, and the hair was shedding to make way for the summer coat.

Other Skins. Polar-bear skins provided very useful "sleds" in spring, when the frozen mud runners of the ordinary sled melted and dropped off. There seems to be an oil in the hair of the polar-bear skin that renders it impervious to water; hence Copper Eskimo travellers commonly used a mitten or pad of bear skin to ice their sled runners. For the same reason sealers preferred a foot-pad of bear skin to one of caribou skin, which sheds its hair with dampness. The natives of Prince Albert Sound and Minto Inlet sometimes used bear skin for clothing, more especially for trousers, because caribou were less plentiful in their districts than farther south. The animal was skinned in the same way as a caribou.

So few brown bears were killed that there was no established use for their skins. Musk-ox skins, on the other hand, were much sought after for bedding, being laid under the caribou skins on top of willow matting. The northern natives sometimes made heavy coats from them.

Hares, foxes, ermines, and marmots were all skinned in the same way. A cut was made up the back of each hind leg and across to the tail, and the skin pulled off forwards. The forelegs were drawn out and severed at the ankles, and the ears were pulled out with the teeth. The tail of the fox, owing to its exceptional length, was often slit half-way down. Hare skins were used only for towels or socks, but fox skins up to at least a generation ago were sometimes made into coats. One of the dance songs popular in 1915 among the Dolphin and Union Strait Eskimo commemorated its use in this way.

The ermine was prized very highly as an ornamental appendage to the coat; consequently, the sight of one of these animals always occasioned the greatest uproar and excitement in a camp.

Of more value to the Copper Eskimo than all the other small animals was the marmot; from its skin they made coats, trousers, caps, trimmings for the tops of snow mittens and boots, and linings for the soles of caribou skin socks. From the same skin, also, they made tool bags and pouches for holding the fire apparatus. As a rule, however, marmot skin coats and trousers were confined to children, because their use by men suggested a lack of skill in caribou hunting. The natives of Victoria Island obtained their marmot skins by barter, as the animal does not extend beyond the mainland.

The Copper Eskimo killed very few wolves or wolverines until they obtained rifles and traps. We saw one man wearing a heavy coat of white wolf skins, and wolverine skins were probably put to similar use; at all events the natives readily made a sleeping bag from wolverine skins for a member of our expedition. They skinned birds in exactly the same way as small animals, except that

I know of only one source for this material that is used at the present time by the Copper Eskimo, Port Epworth at the mouth of Tree River in Coronation Gulf, where the talc chlorite schist occurs as an inclusion in the granite. It is very coarse in texture, and of a pale grey colour, as can be seen in unused specimens or by fracturing an old one.

Nevertheless, there seem once to have been other sources. An old woman who lived at the east end of Coronation Gulf told me that long ago her people used to make lamps and pots from stone obtained in a quarry on Rae River. An early explorer, John Rae, did find soapstone at the fall 10 miles from the mouth of this river,[1] but only in thin beds, which might explain why the Eskimo ceased to use this source. Then again, I purchased from a Coronation Gulf native a little toy lamp of typical Copper Eskimo shape (Figure 50), which was certainly not made from the Port Epworth soapstone, for it is much finer in texture and of a pale green colour. In the same region I obtained also an unfinished implement, resembling an imitation lance-head, which was made from a very similar soapstone, but is yellowish green. Finally, from the west coast of Hudson Bay, probably from Chesterfield Inlet, the museum has a toy lamp (IV.C.165) that resembles in colour, texture, and graining the green toy lamp bought in Coronation Gulf; in shape and dimensions the two are practically identical except that the Hudson Bay specimen has no shelf. Morley E. Wilson, of the Geological Survey, Canada, expressed the opinion that these lamps almost certainly came from the same quarry, because this type of soapstone is exceedingly rare in Canada, and that the implement like a lance-head was also derived from the same locality. It is worth noting that there are deposits of soapstone near the mouth of Back River.

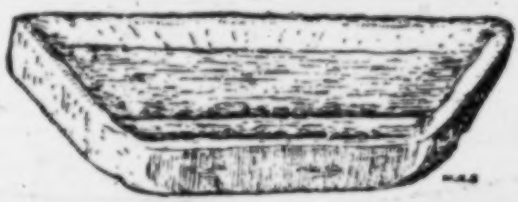

Figure 50. Toy lamp, of pale green soapstone. IV.D.612. 1/1.

Up to a few years ago natives from Dolphin and Union Strait in the west to Amundsen Gulf in the east often migrated to the Port Epworth quarry in the spring of the year in order to manufacture their own lamps and pots. Each family usually made more vessels than it required for its own use in order to have some for barter when it returned home the following autumn or winter.

Women and children often fashioned the smaller lamps and pots. The larger ones were the work of the men, although once they were finished and handed over to the housewife they became her exclusive property. No special skill was required; children 10 years of age could make small lamps just as good as those made by their elders. A little more care was necessary in working at a pot, because the rock, though soft, was somewhat brittle, and the walls and bottom had to be comparatively thin; but even this was not beyond the ability of a child, as it required patience rather than technical skill. With his crude copper tools a native could quarry out his block and make the largest lamp that was ever used in about 3 days, and the largest pot in no more than a day longer; iron tools, of course, appreciably lessened the time. First, he chiselled

[1] Richardson, Sir John: Journal of a Boat Voyage through Rupert's Land, vol. I, p. 313. London, 1851

354 lamps of this type unless derived by them in trade from the Copper Eskimo, for
• 437 their convenient shape and large size caused them to command an extensive
439 market. Not only were they bartered from group to group throughout the Coronation Gulf area, but they were traded along the coast to the Netchilik Eskimo of King William Island, and westward beyond the natives of Mackenzie delta to Barrow.[1]

435 Their value naturally increased according to their distance from the source
354 of supply. Thus, on the west coast of Victoria Island, when the small 12-inch
322 lamp (Figure 55) fell and shattered its back rim, its owner, or more probably
237 her husband, did not discard it, as she would probably have done in Coronation
356 Gulf, but made an entirely new back piece of wood, which she lashed through three holes with cords of sealskin or plaited sinew.[2] The larger lamps, of course, were mended everywhere, sometimes with another piece of soapstone, more usually with wood, which was cemented with seal blood and secured with lashings.

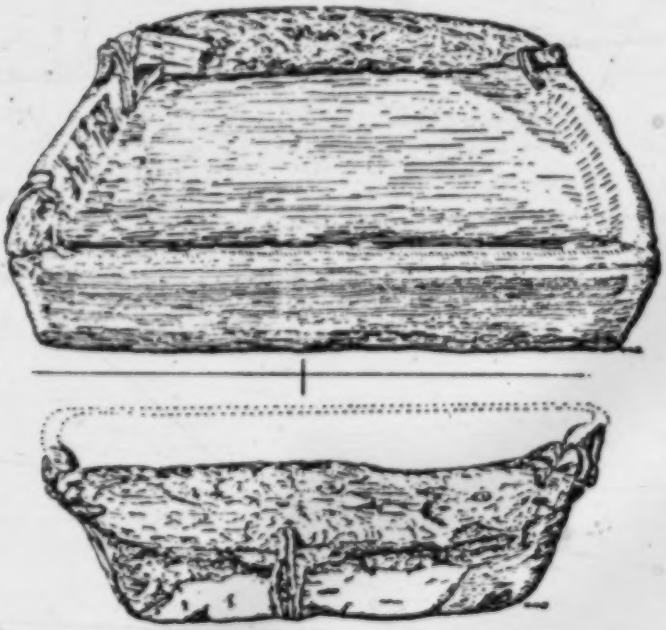

Figure 55. Lamp repaired with wood. IV.D.1900. Approx. 1/3.

354 The National Museum of Canada possesses two very shallow ellipsoidal lamps, obtained in Prince Albert Sound, that have no partitions, are rounded on the bottoms, inside and outside, and must be tilted forward to permit the oil to flow to the wick. One (Figure 56), 15¼ inches long by 8½ inches wide, has been

[113]

[1] G. Simpson, John: The Western Eskimo; Arctic Papers for the Expedition of 1875, London, 1875, p. 267.
[2] The specimen is too heavily encrusted with blubber to determine the exact material of the lashings.

lines, harpoon lines, and lashings of various kinds. No doubt the Copper Eskimo in emergencies made use of sinew from other sources, for the Mackenzie Delta natives sometimes use the sinew on the tail of the fox, which is about a foot long and said to be of excellent quality. 283

After the flesh had been carefully scraped away the sinew was allowed to dry a little; but as prolonged exposure to the heat of the sun rendered it stiff and brittle, it was generally stored away at once in a bag. The value of a slab of back sinew was fairly high everywhere along the Arctic coast.[1] Caribou were very abundant in the Copper Eskimo country until about 1919, but in the absence of linen or cotton thread—which in any case is less suitable for skin garments—sinew was in such great demand that it was constantly traded from one family or group to another. [435] [136] [437]

For ordinary sewing a thin strand was stripped off the slab with the teeth or thumb nail, drawn through the teeth to remove all roughness, and rolled against the cheek to twist it into a single smooth thread. Waterboots, however, called for a stouter three-ply thread, made by the women and girls in the house, where they fastened the ends of the threads to the drying rack, and caught the middle strand between the second and third fingers while they crossed the two outer ones with the thumbs and index fingers. Fishing lines of leg sinew were plaited similarly of three strands, but the harpoon lines, which required to be flat, had from four to eight strands, sometimes even more. Twisting, as with rope, was an unknown art.

Sewing Bags and Baskets. A Copper Eskimo woman without her needle and thread would have been as uncomfortable as a European housewife without her knitting. Sewing was no impediment to gossip: the woman sat on the sleeping skins, her legs doubled under her or stretched out in front, and plied her needle and her tongue at the same rate. Always she sewed from right to left; only a left-handed person sewed in the opposite direction. She held the thimble on the first finger (not on the middle, as we do), and pushed the needle through the skin with the side of the thimble, not with its top, if indeed it had a top. Then she caught the point between the thumb and middle finger, drew the needle out, turned it on its side, and with her thimble behind it pulled through the thread and reinserted the needle for the next stitch. Usually she did not tauten the thread until the second stitch. 294 462 [516] [521]

There was more sewing to be done at certain seasons than at others. Thus, in the autumn, all the new clothing for the winter had to be finished before the sun disappeared below the horizon for the long winter night. The women then sewed from early morning until late at night, with only brief respites to cook the meals or to pass the time of day with neighbours. A woman who had no children to sew for was, of course, less busy; the mother of a family was obliged not only to make the clothes for the whole household, but to train her girls to be dressmakers also. The latter began their training with odd scraps of skin, which they learned to join with neat close stitches. Later, they mended rents in their own clothing, and made dolls fully clothed from head to foot. Many men could make their own trousers and socks, and even sealskin shoes in an emergency; but only a very few could cut out a well-fitting coat or make a pair of waterboots that would really keep out the water. Even the women never attained great skill in these last-mentioned tasks until long after marriage, and a young wife often sought the assistance of an older relative or friend. [221] 294 462 868

The work-basket of most women was a bag of caribou or some other skin, or else, more rarely, a neatly worked basket of coiled willow twigs held in place with willow-bark stitching (Figures 91, 92). All the baskets that I saw were 415 [285]

[1] In 1914 the price of one slab of reindeer back sinew at Barrow, Alaska, was $1.

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 90]

28: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1946
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

CHAPTER V

MISCELLANEOUS

493 *Sleds.* Copper Eskimo sleds had neither side pieces nor handles, but consisted merely of two stout runners joined by a number of crossbars. They averaged in length 14 or 15 feet, but some measured over 20 feet and others [484] less than 4. Sleds under 10 feet in length, however, were rather uncommon; being too short to carry all the household furniture, they served for short trips only, for transporting goods to and from the caches, and, when the family was blessed (or cursed) with many possessions, for relieving the main sled of part of its load.

493 The most important parts of a sled were naturally the runners, for suitable 313 logs seldom drifted up on the shores and the forests lay many days' travel to [437] the south. Consequently, both single runners and the completed sleds were valuable articles of trade, current from one end of the country to the other, and natives from remote districts made long journeys to the spruce woods on Coppermine River to manufacture sleds for themselves. Under these conditions, one neither expected, nor could I find, any significant differences in size or shape between the sleds of different districts. One typical of several that I measured had the following dimensions:

	Ft.	Ins.
Length	16	1
Number of crossbars	14	
Breadth between runners	1	8
Width of runners at top		2½
Width of runners at bottom		2
Height of runners		10
Thickness of bone and mud shoeing		2

493 The runners of this sled had been shod with bones from a whale that 321 drifted ashore near the eastern end of Dolphin and Union Strait; but the great majority lacked both this bone shoeing, and the shoeing of decayed driftwood that has been described by Stefansson,[1] though it escaped my own observation.

493 The same writer says that "In the fall, when the sled is to be used sod is 823 cut in strips as long as convenient and about three inches thick and four inches wide. Lengthwise, along the flat side of these is cut a groove the width of the sled runner and the sod is put under the runners as shoeing. With a little water these are securely frozen to the bottom of the runners, the fuzz of the half-decayed wood holding them securely. The bottom of the runners is then rounded off with an adze or knife so the sod takes the form of a longitudinally bisected cylinder."

[114] I myself did not see this method of cutting and attaching the mud. The natives with whom I travelled on Victoria Island in the autumn of 1915 dug up their mould with mattocks, shredded it inside their snow-huts to remove the roots (which would tend to produce cracks), mixed it with water, and kneaded it into soft balls, each rather larger than a baseball, which they laid along the bottoms of the runners, kneaded together, and smoothed, first with their hands, then, after the mud had frozen, with their snow knives. A few weeks later they patched this shoeing in exactly the same way, after it had been chipped by sharp upstanding stones during their overland journey to the coast. Thenceforward it lasted throughout the winter, although every time a sled was used

[1] Anth. Papers, Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., vol. XIV, p. 79.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

bullet with his ramrod; when that failed, he borrowed another rifle and fired a blank cartridge down the muzzle, while a crowd of natives stood around him to see the result. Fortunately there were no casualties; the chamber merely swelled to the size of a hen's egg and cracked. Then the man and his companions, thinking that the tempered steel might be malleable like the native copper they used for their tools, attempted to weld the crack by pounding on it with a heavy stone.

Hitherto I had escaped all friction with the natives; now came my first trouble. I was sitting in their largest hut, bartering knives, files, and cooking-pots for the usual museum specimens. A native offered to exchange a small horn drinking ladle for a twelve-inch butcher's knife, and I refused, since the knife was worth a dozen such ladles. He knew that all my companions were fifty miles away, and determined to take by force what he was unable to obtain through barter. He seized the knife, and I seized his wrist. In strength we were equally matched; he could not release his wrist, nor could I force the knife out of his fingers. The hut was crowded to suffocation with Eskimos, who made no attempt to take part in the struggle, but waited to see the issue. They had no chief, no one with authority to settle the case at strife; if my adversary won, the more lawless would band together and strip me of everything I had. The

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

123 situation seemed desperate as I played my last card.
437 Looking sternly into the man's eyes, I intoned in English, slowly and deliberately, "If—you—do—not—hand—over—that—knife—there—will—be—no—more—trade—between—your—people—and—my—people."

The effect of these words was magical. The natives, understanding no English, thought them a curse that would bring some dire calamity upon their heads. My adversary was terrified. He glanced at his kinsmen uneasily, not knowing what might happen to him the next minute; but—he still clung to the knife. Then the owner of the hut caught hold of his arm and ordered him to release the weapon. It dropped from his fingers, and he pushed through the crowd to the doorway. Not until many weeks later did he venture to appear in my presence again, or to visit our station at Bernard Harbour.

I refused to trade for some days after this incident, and threatened to cut off all trade at Bernard Harbour during the winter. The loss to the Eskimos would have been infinitely greater than to us, because there were only three things we wished to purchase—caribou meat for ourselves, seal meat for the dogs, and
[411] museum specimens. The natives, on the contrary, had many wants; they cried insistently for steel knives, iron pots, and metal goods of every description, but above all for rifles and ammunition to replace their bows and arrows.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

arrows. We had supplies in abundance to cover most of their needs; but the other members of our party spoke no Eskimo, and had gladly delegated all the trading to me after the first day's experience. Anderson, who joined us at Christmas, approved the arrangement, which held throughout the duration of the expedition. It placed a power in my hands that increased my security among the natives and rescued me from more than one awkward predicament. On this occasion the mere cessation of trade for a few days quelled their aggressiveness and checked any further attempt at open robbery.

As soon as the majority of the women had finished their sewing, the Eskimos began to migrate along the coast to a low promontory from which they could cross in one day to the Liston and Sutton Islands. They moved on different mornings, and at different hours of the morning, some early and some late. Their only clocks were the sun by day and the moon and stars by night; but the sun had now disappeared for several weeks, the moon set early, and the stars do not shine through walls of snow. So my host, who wished to set out at daybreak, roused his household nearly three hours too soon; and his grievous error made us shiver in idleness on the sleeping-platform until it grew light enough to load up the sleds.

The villagers were too practical to carry all the furniture out through the long passageways when they

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

some friends in British Columbia, and felt our isolation slip away for a few hours as we joined with the rest of the Christian world in common festival.

Our enlarged party now required more accommodation, so the store became a kitchen fitted with bunks for Castel and Cockney. The two western Eskimos, Palaiyak and Ikey, slept in a tent surrounded by snow-walls covered with a tarpaulin roof. The house itself was reserved for the six members of the scientific staff. That, at least, was our intention; but unfortunately the natives around us were too civilized to read the notice on the door, and inundated our hut as frequently as before.

Christmas ended, I returned to my Eskimos at Putulik, in the Liston and Sutton Islands, taking Palaiyak as assistant and interpreter. The natives whom I had visited on Victoria Island had also gathered there, so that the settlement now consisted of some thirty families living in twenty-five snow-huts. We erected our tent right in their midst, and built a snow-hut over it, both for warmth and for extra storage-room between the two walls. Not wishing to violate any of their customs concerning the sharing of food, we entertained two or three visitors at every meal, and distributed the scraps among the crowd at the door. Trading and visiting among the houses occupied most of the day-time; but after the hunters returned from their sealing we attended the celebra-

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

123
437 tions in the dance-house, or gathered the elder men
124 inside our tent and enquired into their customs and beliefs.

802 Compared with the Eskimos of Alaska, these natives were astonishingly primitive. Their language contained no word for any number beyond six. I induced a woman to count on her fingers, and she began, in her own tongue, "one, two, one." I corrected her, and she started again, "one, two, three." There she stopped, and a man standing beside her said "four." Both had forgotten the words for the next two numbers, considering everything above four as many. Yet they were not so primitive as to be easily short-changed in any transaction, for they could separate a pile of articles into groups of three or four and count them with tolerable accuracy. A man to whom I gave only nineteen cartridges instead of twenty fitted them into an empty box, discovered the error, and indignantly demanded the missing round.

125 These people lacked, too, the artistic skill for which
532 their kinsmen in other places are famous. I distributed pencils and paper to several adults, both men and women, and asked them to draw sketches of people, houses, caribou, and anything else they cared to attempt. The results were amusing, similar to what we should expect from a child of six. Even my chart
[823] they were unable to follow. One man, more intelligent than the rest, seemed to grasp that a certain

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

797 609 648 months after my visit and carried them south for trial. Both men were sentenced to death, but the penalty was later commuted to two years' imprisonment. They were ultimately restored to their homes, where one of them, profiting by his experience of civilization, rendered useful service to the new police posts that were established in Coronation Gulf.

609 The news that white men were wintering in their country not eighty miles away caused a great commo- 609 tion among the villagers. They anticipated a renewal 437 of their profitable trade with Captain Bernard four years before, and hastily prepared to migrate en 492 masse to Bernard Harbour. Before dawn a long file 489 of sleds, laden five and six feet high with the family possessions, streamed slowly over the snow in the direction of Locker Point. Wives and daughters pulled in front of the dogs, urging them on with frequent cries; fathers and sons hauled behind them, giving added encouragement with their walking-sticks. Here an old woman staggered feebly along, clutching the sled for support; there a dog running loose dragged an old man [859] at the end of its trace. A nine-months-old baby slept peacefully on top of a load, enveloped in a caribou skin to protect it from the wind. Far in the rear came Knife's big sled, loaded to its full capacity, and trailing a smaller sled laden almost as heavily. Wealth has its disadvantages in the Arctic also; Knife could hardly

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

CHAPTER VI

LENGTHENING DAYS

BERNARD HARBOUR presented a scene of extraordinary activity and confusion during the three weeks following our return; in fact, it was the busiest and most populous trading post in the whole of Arctic Canada. Five-score natives were living in snow-huts along the beach not fifty yards from our door; and from a similar settlement a few miles away men, women, and even children drifted across daily to trade with us and to visit our neighbours. We tried to bar them from the house during the day and let them enter after supper only; but they flooded in at all hours, and treated the place exactly like one of their own homes.

I myself was glad of their presence. I could spend

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

123
• 437 the whole day inside our warm house writing down
126 their customs and beliefs; and I could buy all the specimens they offered me, for the tents where I stored them lay right at our door. The natives sang dance-songs each evening into my phonograph, and helped to transcribe the words when I played them over for their entertainment. True, their numbers embarrassed me occasionally; they jostled my arm as they crowded around, talked incessantly all at the same time, and laughed at the babel of their own voices. But they were always good-natured, and genuinely interested in helping on my work.

123 The other four residents of our little home hardly welcomed the intrusion, although they cheerfully endured it from a misguided compassion for me. They usually took refuge in their bunks after supper, to delve into Arctic literature or ponder over scientific notes; but whenever the invasion threatened to overwhelm me, they came to the rescue by delivering an attack on the flanks. O'Neill displayed queer conjuring tricks, Johansen showed pictures of strange birds and animals, Chipman drew the likenesses of our visitors, and Cox made them join hands and dip for trinkets into a bowl of salt water connected with two or three electric cells. The natives turned the tables on us one evening by subjecting our faces to a rigid scrutiny. Chipman and O'Neill, they concluded, were very young because they seemed to grow no beards, but

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and party until the official program came to an end. Some of the more elderly natives, wearied with the eight hours' continuous performance, then retired to rest; but the younger kept up the dancing until early morning.

During the two days that followed, gossip and barter divided the hours with informal dances. Our visitors watched me furtively. Only one white man had crossed their lives before, and even he had vanished before they knew him intimately, or could assure themselves that he really came from that far-distant corner of the earth where a great pole props up the sky. They remembered the legend which said that Eskimos, Indians, and white men were originally brothers, their mother a beautiful woman who rejected every suitor until her father's dog, metamorphosed into a handsome young man, visited her and won her love. She herself went down to the ocean floor to preside over the waves, the fish, and the sea mammals; but her children scattered in all directions. Only the Eskimos remained human; the Indians kept their human forms, but became like wild beasts at heart; and the white men degenerated into monsters even in outward appearance.

So the Tormiat followed all my movements with the utmost curiosity. They still thought their legend partly true, and waited expectantly for evidence of my "monstrosity." Icehouse herself, my adopted mother,

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nourished Icehouse wriggled in her bag for several minutes before she tumbled, like an enormous chrysalis, head foremost onto the floor.

We occupied a real snow-hut at the Lake of Dancing, one that had been erected by our companions a week or more before. Here we dismantled our caches of dried meat and dried fish, and recovered my sled, the big spring tent, and all the other things we had deposited at this place in the early days of summer. Foxes, worming their way through sundry chinks and crevices in the stones, had destroyed all the sinew fishing-lines; fortunately we had plenty of cod-line that could take its place. More serious was the destruction of the white-bellied caribou hides from which Icehouse had intended to make some finely ornamented costumes for the winter dances; but I assuaged her grief by promising to purchase other hides for her when the tribes reassembled at the sealing-grounds. We sighted one of the marauding foxes near our camp, and lured it within range by squeaking like a young bird; but Ikpuck's bullet struck only the ground between its legs, and, though deluged with snow, it escaped without injury.

After fishing in various lakes for a few days with little success we overtook our companions at the source of a creek that flows into Dryad Harbour. They had abandoned all further hunting and fishing on the land under the pressure of colder weather and were return-

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Eskimos from both sides of the strait, and from the Coppermine River area, flocked to the station to trade before the opening of the sealing season, until their new-born village on the edge of the ice contained nearly a hundred and fifty inhabitants. They remained with us for three weeks, giving no trouble, although we excluded all but Ikpuck's family from the house until nightfall. I tried, with Patsy's assistance, to delve into their religion and to record their ancient traditions; but privacy was impossible and fear of public disapproval sealed their lips. They spent their days in trading with me, or in visiting each other's huts and holding impromptu dances; then, after the white men had put away their note-books and retired to read in their bunks, they gathered around my phonograph and filled the house with song. Although the love of music is inborn, not taught, I had hoped that the sweetness of their voices would kindle an æsthetic glow in the cold, scientific breasts of my companions. But Cox leaped violently from his bed one midnight, and with neither sympathy nor ceremony expelled the belated choristers into the outer darkness.

All the chants they sang for me were either dance-songs or incantations to create fine weather. I asked them for lullabies; they responded with more dance-songs. The mother who rocked her baby to sleep on her back, under the warm fur coat, crooned the same melodies that she shouted in the dance-house to the booming of the drum.

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123 meaning of the flags and tinselled paper that covered the walls and tables of our hut. But when they opened their "stockings," filled to the brim with chocolate cakes, needles, thread, and enough cloth to make each of them a dress, their eyes nearly burst from their sockets and their joy pealed forth in uncontrollable laughter.

Guests are indispensable for a perfect Christmas, and ours, though unheralded, were none the less wel-
574 come. Two half-civilized Eskimos and their wives
• 437 from the hinterland of Hudson Bay, hearing that white men had settled in Dolphin and Union Strait, journeyed four hundred miles to visit us and to barter their furs for ammunition, tea, and tobacco. They arrived two days before Christmas, and left us the day following it to return to their country; but on Christmas evening they thanked us for our hospitality by holding a dance in the kitchen. The only drum we could muster was an aluminum frying-pan with a hard, penetrating note, which our visitors pounded nobly as they pranced round the room, chanting a monotonous refrain. Jennie and her companion thought the music rather strange, and seemed relieved when the concert ended. As for ourselves, while we greatly appreciated the goodwill of our guests, we kept the door wide open and expedited their retirement with a liberal present of tobacco.

225 After Christmas, Patsy and I returned to the Eski-

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mos at the Liston and Sutton Islands on a day when the calm weather had drawn every hunter out to the ice-field, even women and young boys. They were standing like pillars over their individual seal-holes, scarcely daring to raise their heads lest they should alarm the seals beneath. But one hunter, Big-Tooth, hailed us, and thinking that he might have harpooned a large bearded seal which he was unable to draw up alone, I sent Patsy ahead with the sled, and hastened to his assistance. As I drew near, however, he left the seal-hole and sauntered toward me.

"It's the white man," he called.

"Yes, Big-Tooth."

"I've had no luck with my sealing," he continued.

"Is that so?"

"Ikpuck has been very successful."

"That's good news."

"I'll search around a little longer before I go home."

"Very well. I'm going straight to the camp." With these words I moved away, but he called out again:

"By the way, have any of our eastern kinsmen arrived yet?"

"No, not yet," I answered, and moved on a few yards.

"By the way, I'll be going home soon."

"Oh, very well," I called without halting.

"By the way, if I catch a seal will you give me some cartridges for part of the meat?"

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CHAPTER XII

THROUGH BLIZZARDS TO SPRING

A BURNING passion was inflaming the heart of The Runner, Icehouse's son. He craved for a Winchester rifle, like the .44 he had used so successfully against the polar bear; and he offered me anything he owned in exchange for one. If he could not earn it by teaching me the native traditions, of which he knew too little, he could at least guide me to the eastern natives, introduce me to them as his adopted brother, and in that way help my researches. His wife, Leaf, pleaded in his favour; but she made me promise, quite unnecessarily as it happened, that I would protect him from the wiles of the women in the

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Musk-ox land and restore him without delay, whole in body and untouched in heart. "Men are so foolish with women," she added, noting his tolerant smile.

Four of us, then, The Runner, Girling, Patsy, and myself, piled our belongings upon a sled and turned our faces eastward. Close to Locker Point, we reached a village of the Coppermine River natives, where signs of starvation confronted us on every side. The women, sheltered behind low walls of snow, were fishing for tom-cod to replace the seals their husbands could not catch; the lamps burned low in many of the huts, or were extinguished from lack of oil; and the hungry children gathered round our tent to beg for food. During the two days we stayed in their village we invited as many as we could to share our meals; but when they uncovered our sled in the darkness, broke into a box of hard biscuits, and emptied twenty-five pounds of rice into their mittens, we brushed the snow of their settlement from our shoes and resumed the interrupted march.

Our next stopping-place was a small settlement near the mouth of Tree River, a hundred miles farther east. The inhabitants turned out as usual to greet us, and after the first salutations, an elderly man, who appeared to be the leader of the band, invited us to enter his hut. There his daughter, a young woman about twenty years of age, was skilfully flensing a freshly killed seal. Her greasy clothes, dishevelled hair, gory arms, and

THROUGH BLIZZARDS TO SPRING

Spring came suddenly about the middle of March, when the thermometer rose well above zero. Our station then became the Mecca for tribes from as far east as the Musk-ox people, who, like the nearer Eskimos, clamoured for trade goods, rifles, and ammunition. These were not the people I had visited three or four weeks previously, but kinsmen from the second camp a few miles farther east, who had lingered at their new sealing-ground until milder weather enabled them to undertake the long journey to Bernard Harbour without hardship. Their leader was a short, white-bearded medicine-man, brusque but always dignified in his movements, and with a shrewd, kindly face that attracted immediate attention. Undoubtedly he possessed great force of character, for his tribesmen reverenced him as a father and complied with all his wishes; nominally the Eskimos recognize no chiefs among themselves, considering every man the equal of every other.

The old man taught me some of his ancient lore, and even summoned a familiar spirit that I might record a shamanistic séance on the phonograph. His followers credited him with the most fantastic powers; he could fly through the air like a bird, go down into the ocean like a fish, see what was happening hundreds of miles away. But the old man never boasted of these things; they might be true, he said, and they might not, for he lost all consciousness of himself when the familiar spirits took possession of his body.